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VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB

VACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA

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October 2011

Acting President's Message

CQ, CQ, CQ To Everyone!

Well, fall is now upon us all and to those with outdoor mounted antennas, now would be a good time to make sure the antenna masts are secured, the guy wires are tight and to inspect as best as possible the coax's leading into your ham shack so that when the wrath of winter is upon everyone, there will be no sudden down time with your ham shack due to an antennas blowing off or down or finding out that the coax has been comprised and thus keeping you from making those important contacts!

And for those with vehicle installed radios, take advantage of the clear weather to make sure your vehicle is ready for the wet weather and/or snow along with making sure those radio connections are also tight, dry and secure which includes the antenna and coax!

As your club's VP, I want to encourage all members to make the trek down to this year's PacifiCon convention being held in Santa Clara at the SC convention arena. A few of us members will be carpooling down there on Saturday, Oct. 15th and yours truly will making the trek down for the Friday antenna seminar. Anyone wishing to carpool with me, please let me know at this month's club meeting. My car can hold 4 adults nicely! One of the seminars to be presented at this year's PacifiCon on Saturday is "The Apocalypse Nuclear Electromagnetic Pulse" which in laymans terms means that if your digital radio isn't protected, it's likely to be toast!

I've heard rumors that it might be wet for this weekend event, but do plan on attending as this year's event looks quite promising and if you need to take a look at the "who's who" at this event, go to: www.pacificon.org and have a great time!!

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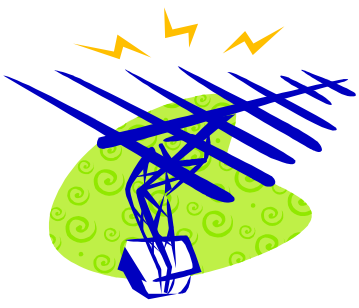
On a sadder note, our own club member, Walter Hampton, WB6JTJ has been stricken in finding blood clot in one of his legs which will keep him from attending our club meeting this month as well as attending the PacifiCon event as he was hoping to. Both Jerry, WD6WKY and myself have been making the time over at Walter's house in getting his antennas up in the air so that despite his disabilities, he can spent some quality time on the air. We recently erected his Diamond X-50A antenna and we will soon erect his new Alpha Delta wire dipole. Both will be about 30-35 feet off of the ground with the wire dipole being attached to 20 ft. of 1-1/4" EMT electrical steel conduit bolted together and secured to a 5 ft. metal tripod mounted to the house roof that is guy wired securely. The Diamond antenna is mounted to a chimney mount and it too is guy wired securely using 20 ft. of the same steel conduit. We are both looking at completing his station work before the end of this month.

After that, it's on to my station projects! Until next month..73!

Marcus Maclean
KI6WDX

PACIFICON 2011, *The Great West Coast Ham Radio Convention*, returns to the San Francisco Bay Area and will again be sponsored by the Mount Diablo Amateur Radio Club.



PACIFICON 2011 will take place Friday, October 14th through Sunday, October 16th, at the Marriott Santa Clara Hotel, 2700 Mission College Boulevard, Santa Clara, California 95054. (Telephone 408 988 1500)

Around the Shack

By Jerry Olive, KD6WKY

Every year the first weekend of October I participate in the California QSO Party; it's my favorite contest. For the past several years I have packed up everything and hooked up with Ralph Jones and a few others to operate a county expedition in what is considered a rare county since few if anyone else is on the air there. It's always been fun to go what I call ham radio camping to those that don't have a clue what I'm doing. Ralph and I have a blast every year.

Unfortunately this year I was unable to participate in a county expedition because of a work commitment in attending my company convention in Las Vegas and only arriving back at SMF the Saturday morning of the contest. I had no time to set up a station anywhere. Ralph was unable to drive north to my area either.

This year I operated in the Single Operator, Low Power category which means less than 200 watts and no spotting networks of any kind. SOLP is a category anyone with an HF radio can work and have lots of fun.

The convention was very good, I learned a lot. Ask me about the belly dancers when you see me. J

I got home and situated by about 10:30am or so but decided to take a rest for an hour or so before set up to begin working the contest. It would do me no good to fall asleep at the radio during a contest.

I began the contest at high Noon. First call was from N6JS just down the road in Fairfield, he was my number one, I was his number 256. The third call was from G4GGR in England. Wow, I had DX working the California QSO Party; cool, and so on down the contest log I went.

I decided to work my first 100 QSO's on phone because I was till tired and phone is easier to work when you are tired. I worked that first 100 QSO's in just under two hours.

I then switched to CW and stayed there for quite a while. I worked mostly on the 15 meter band switching up to 10 meters for awhile. I have always found 20 meters to be a giant RF bizarre with people yelling over each other wasting time. The 15 meter band is always less crowded and these days with such great propagation, I was busy the entire time I was calling CQ, never a dull moment.

After supper I switched to the lower bands and worked lots of stations on 40 meters and a fare amount of stations on 80 meters picking up every state west of the Rockies.

I got up early Sunday morning and was on the air with a hot cup of coffee by 5:30am and in no time has JA's in the log. I always work JA's on 40 meters Sunday mornings during this contest every year.

The contest ended at 3:00pm Sunday afternoon. The third to last call in the log was the state of North Dakota and the last state I needed for work all states during CQP. I still needed Northern Territories and Saskatchewan for a clean sweep. It never came. Still working all states in less than 27 hours including eight hours sleep is very good.

I logged in 271 phone contacts and 371 CW contacts for a total of 642 contacts and a claimed score of 92,680, best ever!

I feel pretty confident I have finished in the top 10 for my category and tops in Solano County in my category. I'll know for sure when the final tally is published sometime next Spring.

New subject – The bands are screamingly open right now. If you have Technician license and access to an HF radio get on 10 meters and work some DX, it's very easy right now. I worked a station in Fiji on five watts last night. Call me!

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB—2011 ELECTED OFFICERS

President: Vacated
Vice President: Marcus Maclean, KI6WDX
Secretary: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Treasurer: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Director: Skip Lawson, AF6HC
Director: Chris Jones, KD7TQO
Director: Antonio Del Rio, N6ZGB
Director: Tom Christman KE6MDM

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Net Control Chairperson: Marcus Maclean KI6WDX
Activities Chairperson: Board of Directors
Newsletter Editor: Jerry Olive, KD6WKY
Newsletter Publisher & Distributor: Bob Hewitt, K6HEW

2011 Merriment on Main

The 2011 Merriment on Main event will be held again this year for the 29th time on Tuesday, November 29, 2011 in downtown Vacaville.

This is the premier community event that our club participates in providing necessary non-emergency communications to the organizers and each other throughout the evening.

This year an additional requirement had been added for all volunteers to this event. All volunteers will need to have a Life Scan finger print done at the Vacaville PD and have a badge issued by the VPD showing you have had this back ground check completed.

As it turns out, at a recent city sponsored event a volunteer from a local church was discovered to have had a conviction involving doing bad things with children. More details can be discussed face to face at the club meeting this week.

VPD is looking for Megan's Law type stuff as well as domestic violence and fire arms convictions in the back ground checks.

I specifically asked them about my misdemeanor possession of marijuana conviction 36 years ago, it didn't seem to be a problem. :)

We'll discuss all the details about this at our club meeting Wednesday night.

Nominations for Club Officers

This is the month we make nominations for club officers for the up coming year. We vote on them in November.

I think we should make it mandatory for anyone making a nomination to also be nominated for a club position, but that rule isn't in the bylaws unfortunately.

Typically we have some club members purposefully not show up for this meeting because they think they might end up being nominated for a job. We can't stop that from happening. However you can still be nominated in your absence. Better to be present to defend yourself.

Attention Techs: 10 Meters Is Hot!

09/29/2011

With solar flux numbers not seen since 2004, the higher HF bands have seen a surge in activity. The solar flux has been at least 100 since August 20. On September 10, it reached 116, rising to 121 the next day. It climbed steadily, reaching a peak of 190 on Saturday, September 24. While higher solar flux is exciting news for all hams, Technicians should definitely take note: The 10 meter band is the only HF band where Techs have phone privileges. "Techs can get use their voice privileges from 28.300-28.500 MHz," explained W1AW Station Manager Joe Carcia, NJ1Q. "If you don't have your own HF rig, find someone in your local radio club who does or call your Elmer. Without a doubt, you don't want to miss this opening. Who knows how long it will last or when it will come back? So get on the air while you can and experience the magic of 10 meters."

What is solar flux? The radiation from the Sun is measured at several different radio frequencies. One of these, 2800 MHz, or a wavelength of 10.7 cm, is most commonly used. The signal at this frequency is called the **solar flux**, and there is a rough relationship between this value and the number of sunspots. By measuring the solar flux, we can determine a general idea of the amount of radiation from the Sun that affects the ionosphere. Higher solar flux levels generally indicate that higher frequencies can propagate.

The solar flux hit its peak during the CQ WW RTTY Contest last weekend. "During the contest, both 10 and 15 meters were definitely hopping," said ARRL News Editor S. Khrystyne Keane, K1SFA. "I've only been licensed since 2006, and I've all the older hams tell me about how wonderful 10 meters could be, but I never saw it myself until the contest. Wow! It was better than I ever imagined, and I'm told it will only get better. I've never seem more than a handful of contacts on 10 meters during a contest, but we had almost 1100 contacts on the band during the 48 hour contest. We worked Senegal, Kenya, New Zealand, South Africa, Europe and Asia, and even Japan on 10 meters. I couldn't believe how hot the band was!"

QST Editor Steve Ford, WB8IMY, agreed. "I got on the radio for the CQ WW RTTY Contest and tuned to 20 meters out of habit. I was surprised at the lack of activity on 20, so I tuned up to 15 meters. So that's where everyone was! I couldn't believe the slew of activity on the higher bands."

But it wasn't only East Coast hams who experienced these spectacular conditions. Chip Margelli, K7JA, of Garden Grove, California, told the ARRL that "the high bands were a delight from out here on the West Coast. In the late afternoon and evening, 10 meters brought in loud stations from Asia, the Pacific, the Caribbean and South America. Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand, Guam, Saipan, and other juicy catches kept my rotator working fast. But the real highlight was the massive opening to Europe and Africa that I enjoyed on Sunday, when I had some time to operate. Not only was I able to work into Western Europe, such as Spain, Portugal, France and England, but 'deeper' Europeans were very loud, as well: Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, the Baltics, the Czech Republic and Slovakia were all thundering in. Weaker signals were coming in from European Russia, Ukraine and other places I haven't heard for seven or eight years on 10 meters out here in Califor-

THE VVRC WELCOMES YOU

The Vaca Valley Radio Club has proudly served the Northern Solano County Area since 1988. We pride ourselves in providing a friendly place for radio amateurs to meet and improve their operating skills.

We participate in public service events throughout the year and are always ready to assist with communications during times of emergency.

Browse our website for more information about our club. If you have any questions please email us at w6vvr@vacavalleyradio.net or call 707-448-5665 for assistance.

The Repeater is Published by the Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143, An ARRL Affiliated Club. Founded 1987, Chartered 1988 General Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM 420 Vine Street Fire Station.

Wheelchair accessible

Visit the Repeater online courtesy of Bob K6HEW at:
http://vacavalleyradio.net

Club repeater in Vacaville:W6VVR 145.47Ø MHz(-) pl 127.3
The W6VVR net call is Tuesday evenings at 8pm on the club repeater. All are invited to participate in this weekly meeting on the air. 73!

Additional local repeaters
WV6F 224.2ØØ(-)

nia. I do not have an amplifier for 10 meters; I use 200 W and a homebrew 5-element Yagi about 60 feet high."

Also on the West Coast, Greg Howe, KI6IUJ, of Laguna Hills, California, played around with the openings on 10 meters. "I decided to take full advantage of the conditions by doing some very low power QRP work. After working several European stations at a 1 W, I decided to really go QRP -- 25 mW, the same power-level of most remote-control garage door openers. I established contacts running about 1 kW with the T32C Christmas Island DXpedition station and EA8CEQ in the Canary Islands. With their okay, I then reduced my power-level down to 25 mW. You don't need lots of power or a fancy antenna when 10 meters really opens up. Exercise a little patience, be persistent and go have some fun!"

"This is just the beginning of the fun and excitement that await us on 10 meters," Margelli said, "but what a beginning it was."

Editor's note—This is no kidding, 10 meters is wide open to Europe, South America, Asia and Oceana right now. Take advantage of it.

FCC Upholds $17,000 *Forfeiture Order* to Tennessee Ham

09/21/2011

In March 2009, the FCC issued a *Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture* (*NAL*) in the amount of $17,000 to David Edward Perka, KA3PRB, of Lewisburg, Tennessee. The FCC alleges that Perka "willfully and repeatedly violat[ed] section 301 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, by operating without a license in the Maritime Radio Service and willfully violat[ed] Section 333 of the Act by maliciously interfering with the United States Coast Guard on the International Distress, Safety and Calling Channel in Annapolis, Maryland." Perka, who admitted to the findings, requested a reduction in the forfeiture amount, based on his inability to pay, but in a ***Forfeiture Order*** released by the FCC on September 21, 2011, the Commission refused to lower the amount.

In April 2008, agents in the FCC's Columbia Office determined that Perka operated on Marine Channel 16 (156.800 MHz), the International Distress, Safety and Calling Channel for stations operating in the Maritime Radio Service. According to the *Forfeiture Order*, even though Perka is a licensed radio amateur, he does not hold a license to operate in the Maritime Service. "The unauthorized transmissions on April 6, 2008 consisted of Perka making threatening statements to the USCG," the FCC stated in the *Forfeiture Order*. "Perka later admitted to FCC agents that the transmissions on April 6, 2008 were intentionally transmitted to harass the USCG. The unauthorized transmissions on April 7, 2008 consisted of tones from a Dual-Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) keypad." In March 2009, the FCC issued a *Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture* (*NAL*) in the amount of $17,000 to Perka

In determining whether it should lower a *Forfeiture Order*, the FCC -- as required by Section 503(b) of the Communications Act -- takes into account "the nature, circumstances, extent and gravity of the violation and, with respect to the violator, the degree of culpability, any history of prior offenses, ability to pay and other such matters as justice may require." The FCC has determined that, in general, gross revenues are the best indicator of an ability to pay a forfeiture. The *NAL* specifically stated that a cancellation or reduction based on inability to pay will not be considered unless the petitioner provides either federal tax returns for the most recent three-year period, financial statements prepared according to generally accepted accounting practices or some other reliable and objective documentation that accurately reflects the petitioner's current financial status.

The FCC considered Perka's response to the *NAL*, but because he did not dispute any of the findings in the *NAL*, the FCC found that Perka "willfully and repeatedly violated Section 301 and willfully violated section 333 of the Communications Act. "The only documentation Perka submitted was a single unemployment check from the State of Maryland dated April 6, 2009," the FCC noted. "Enforcement Bureau staff provided Perka an additional opportunity to submit documentation in support of his request for a reduction based on an inability to pay. Although we have evidence that Perka received the letter, we have not received a response. We therefore have no basis for assessing Perka's financial situation and find that a forfeiture in the amount of $17,000 is warranted."

ARRL Facebook Page: 20,000 Fans Strong

09/12/2011

With more than 20,000 fans on Facebook, the ARRL Facebook page is the number one spot for hams on the Internet's most popular social networking site. Not only is the ARRL page the most popular Amateur Radio page on Facebook, it is attracting many young -- and not-so-young -- hams to share their opinions and ham radio-related news with other hams.

According to Facebook demographics, more than 460 people between the ages of 13-17 are fans of the ARRL's page, with 74 percent of users below the age of 55 (Facebook breaks down its statistics in age groups of 13-17, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55+). Since September 2010, hundreds of users post their own comments on the page, make a comment on a post or "like" a comment each week. The ARRL has been active on Facebook since July 2010; since that time, the page has been viewed almost 14.5 million times by fans and non-fans alike. The ARRL also has a Logbook of the World Facebook page. Premiering in June 2011, this popular page has almost 1000 ham fans.

"We are excited to have such a strong presence on Facebook," said ARRL News Editor S. Khrystyne Keane, K1SFA, who serves as the Chief Administrator of the ARRL's Facebook pages. "Through our page, we try to showcase Amateur Radio fun by using interactive status updates, articles from the ARRL

DX0DX Spratly DXpedition "Permanently Cancelled"

After numerous setbacks, Chris Dimitrijevic, VK3FY, announced on the DX0DX website that the planned 2012 DX0DX DXpedition to the Spratly Islands has been "permanently cancelled." No explanation was given for the cancellation and Dimitrijevic did not respond to e-mails from the ARRL. Spratly currently sits at #32 on *DX Magazine*'s "Most Wanted" List.

The DX0DX Spratly DXpedition had been pushed back at least twice. It was first supposed to happen in January 2011, and then it was delayed until April. According to Dimitrijevic, the postponement to April 2011 was "due to circumstances beyond the control of the DX0DX Team and in the best interests of the Team of Operators." On April 10, 2011, Dimitrijevic sent out a notice that said that 10 of the original 37 operators of the planned 2011 DX0DX DXpedition indicated that they will return in April 2012, but that will not be happening.

In April 2012, however, another group is planning a DXpedition to the Spratly Islands. According to the September 4 edition of the Ohio/Penn DX Association's bulletin, members of the Malaysian Amateur Radio Transmitter Society (MARTS) are planning a "2012 Project" to activate Pulau Layang Layang (AS-051) in the Spratlys during the first two weeks of the month. The team leader is C.L. Neoh, 9M2CLN, with support by Tack Kumagai, JE1CKA, and the 9M4SDX Team. The DXpedition coordinator is Tex Izumo, 9M2TO. MARTS is Malaysia's IARU Member-Society.

The Spratlys are a group of more than 750 reefs, islets, atolls, cays and islands in the South China Sea between Vietnam, the Philippines, China, Malaysia and Brunei. They comprise less than 4 square kilometers of land area, spread out over more than 425,000 square kilometers of sea.

Small, remote islands such as the Spratlys have little economic value in themselves, but are important in establishing international boundaries. There are rich fishing grounds and geological surveys indicate the area may contain significant oil and gas reserves. As such, many countries claim the islands for their own, including the Philippines, Vietnam, the People's Republic of China and Republic of China (Taiwan). Additionally, Brunei claims Louisa Reef, as well as an Exclusive Economic Zone around that and neighboring reefs. Malaysia claims portions of the state of Sabah, as does the Philippines.

On March 31, 1979, just three days after departing Brunei, North Borneo -- six hams -- Harry Meade, VK2BJL; Stew Woodward, K4SMX; Bill Poellmitz, K1MM; John Ackley, KP2A, Austin Regal, N4WW, and Bob Schenck, N2OO -- were on the boat *Banyandah* that would take them to the Spratlys. The boat was captained by the husband-wife team of Jack and Judith Binder. In the February 1998 issue of *QST*, Schenck recounted their trip: "We all cheered when we first spotted Amboyna Cay in the distance. It first appeared as a small white speck on the horizon.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

VACA VALLEY RADIO CLUB, INC.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

Please Print & Fill in Completely — Dues are delinquent January 1st

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
Street: _____
City: _____Zip: _____
Phone: (_____) _____-_____OK to Publish ?(_____)
License Class: _____ ARRL Member ?(_____)
E-Mail Address_____

FAMILY Member (Spouse or Children)

Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)
Name: _____ Call Sign_____
License Class: _____ARRL Member ?(_____)

MEMBER Dues ----------$20.00 _____
Each Family Member ---$ 2.00 _____
Student ----------$ 5.00 _____
Repeater/Autopatch donation--- _____
Call/Name badge ---------$10.00 _____
Optional ARRL membership
ARRL dues----------$37.00 _____
Senior is 65 yr or older with one time proof on age.

Total---------- _____
Paid by CASH: ____ Check #_____
DATE:_____

Mail to : Vaca Valley Radio Club, PO Box 143, Elmira, CA 95625-0143